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20

(Not) Measuring Mixedness in the Netherlands

Guno Jones and Betty de Hart

Introduction

Mainstream Dutch academia as well as society more generally have largely ignored or denied the importance of racialized logic in the formation of the Netherlands. As Gloria Wekker has explained in her groundbreaking book *White Innocence* (2016), the Dutch self-representation depends on the avoidance of race, built on the idea that the Dutch have always been colour-blind, and hospitable and tolerant towards others. ‘Racism’ was projected outwards, a problem of the USA and the Nazis, but not ‘us’, the Dutch. Still, a reservoir of knowledge and sentiment built on decades of imperial rule continues to impact meaning-making processes in Dutch society. It results in uneasiness, avoidance, ignorance, and denial surrounding issues of race, which is not only about not knowing but also about not wanting to know (Essed and Hoving 2014; Hondius 2016).

Thus, the Netherlands offers a paradox of ‘race’ as an absent presence. While, ‘race’ and ‘mixed race’ are not considered relevant social categories in policymaking, mainstream academic research, or dominant discourse, racialized logics have shaped Dutch colonial territories and keep informing present-day Dutch society (Legêne 2010; Wekker 2016; Essed and Hoving 2014; Stoler 2002). Consequently, official data produced to inform government

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policy do not use 'race' as a category. Instead, an allochthone-autochthone binary is assumed to signify 'ethnic' and 'immigrant' descent and can be found in monitors of the position of racialized categories of non-majoritarian inhabitants, irrespective of citizenship status, for example, in monitoring both integration and discrimination (Andriessen et al. 2012). An 'allochthone' is defined as anyone with one parent born abroad, further subdivided into 'western' and 'non-western' allochthones, while 'autochthones' connotes white Dutchness.

Thus, it is self-evident that in the Netherlands, no statistics are produced on the numbers of 'mixed race' people. On the other hand, the number of 'ethnically mixed' mixed marriages (of allochthones with autochthones) are monitored and seen as a 'core indicator' and a motor of integration (see Table 20.1). Other than from this integration perspective, a critical debate on the social meanings of mixture (mixed couples and families) and children of 'mixed-descent', or 'mixed race', people is absent, as is a relevant academic research tradition on these issues.¹ For instance, in recent efforts to draw up scenarios for the future of the Netherlands as an increasingly diverse migration country, mixed couples, families, and people of mixed descent are not mentioned at all (WRR 2018). In short, while biological constructions of 'race' and 'mixed race' permeate Dutch society, no contemporary statistics on the number of 'mixed race' people in the Netherlands exist.

Our chapter premises the mutual constitution of metropole and colony, although in complex ways. Within the Dutch empire, the colonial populations were divided according to categories of race, which implied the racial distribution of positions, wealth, and opportunities. The figure of the 'mixed' person occupied an ambiguous position in the hierarchical colonial order. Colonial hierarchies of 'race' and Dutch civilizationalism deeply informed metropolitan Dutch culture and classifications (Legêne 2010; Wekker 2016; Stoler 2002; Essed and Hoving 2014). Therefore, this chapter starts with this historical context. Furthermore, we pay attention to how next to phenotype, essentialized understandings of ethnicity, religion, and nationality have functioned in the hierarchical ordering of humans. Since 'race' is a social construction rather than a pre-existing ontological fact, we use the term 'inter-racialized' relationships and 'multi-racialized' individuals to refer to relationships between differentially racialized individuals and their offspring (following Haritaworn 2009; 2012).

The outline of this chapter is as follows. First, we describe the colonial context of the racial categories used in Caribbean colonies and the Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia) and how multiracialized individuals were positioned within these racial hierarchies. Phenotype intersected with gender and sexuality in

Table 20.1 Percentage of 'allochthones' marrying a partner from another population group

	Western allochthones	Non-western allochthones	Of which					Other non-westerners
			Turks	Moroccans	Surinamese	Antilleans/Arubans		
2001	87	33	12	14	41	68	55	
2002	86	34	13	14	41	66	55	
2003	87	36	15	16	43	66	56	
2004	87	39	16	20	47	67	58	
2005	87	41	19	19	47	65	59	
2006	87	40	17	17	47	65	61	
2007	87	40	17	16	49	64	65	
2008	86	39	17	16	47	62	63	
2009	85	39	16	16	47	64	63	
2010	82	37	15	16	48	63	58	
2011	81	38	16	17	48	65	58	
2012	81	39	16	18	50	60	60	
2013	79	38	15	19	50	71	57	
2014	76	38	16	18	50	68	57	

Source: CBS⁹

these hierarchies. Subsequently, we demonstrate how these colonial racialized categories were translated after decolonization to fit in the supposedly 'nonracial' metropolitan context in which historically religion and nationality had been used as markers of difference. Looking at the present, we analyse the shift over time of markers of difference: from religion to nationality (including dual nationality), to 'allochthone', and finally 'people with a migration background'.

Colonial Implications of Racial Classifications and 'Mixedness'

Dutch history demonstrates the violence of ideologies of race and 'mixed race people'. Nowhere is this clearer than in the colonial territories. Racial classifications functioned in the hierarchical and exploitative ordering of human bodies in the Dutch colonial context. Colonial classifications and their present-day afterlives are surely not to the benefit of people that are classified in categories relegated to a position at the (symbolic, social, and legal) bottom of the racialized colonial social order. This picture, however, is complicated by the fact that 'the colonized', both in the West Indies and the East Indies, also made strategic use of these colonial classifications, thereby both maintaining and undermining these racialized logics.

The Caribbean

During the years of slavery, Suriname and Curaçao were plantation societies deeply structured by colonial classifications of race giving meaning to phenotypical features and descent, which intersected with the basic distinction between 'enslaved' and 'free persons'. Before the official censuses were introduced, the population in the Caribbean Dutch colonies was registered on several occasions. One of the earliest known registrations in colonial Suriname in 1738 mentions 'Whites' ('blanken'), 'free Mulattos/Coloureds and Negroes', and 'Slaves' (Van Lier 1977, p. 71). The 1811 official colonial census of the population of Suriname, held during an intermediate period of English colonial rule, subdivided the population into 'Whites', 'Free Coloureds or Negroes', and 'Slaves'. The free population was subdivided into Christians and Jews.² People who were not a part of the racialized plantation economy, such as Maroons and Indigenous people, were not counted. The fact that 'free' is not an adjective for the category of 'Whites', but an adjective for 'Mulattos/Coloureds' and 'Negroes' implies that the latter were either 'unfree' or 'free'

whereas all those classified as white were by definition free persons. There were no 'Whites' in the category of 'Slaves'. Moreover, in a 1776 ordonnance, the Dutch parliament ruled that while the distinction between free humans and enslaved was abolished for people in the Netherlands, this rule did not apply to 'Negroe- and other slaves' from the colonies that travelled to the Netherlands with their masters. This was aimed at protecting the property rights of the masters, in response to enslaved individuals from Curaçao who had tried to escape slavery by travelling to the Netherlands as stowaways (Balai 2011, pp. 21–22). As a consequence, being a free person became an inherent aspect of being white. Non-whites could obtain freedom via manumission, which was costly and required permission from both the master and the colonial administration, or by seeking refuge among Maroon communities.

Slavery may be viewed as 'legal anti-citizenship' since it was inextricably bound up with Dutch law in its negation of citizenship. A precondition for the system was the recognition of inalienable property rights for metropolitan Dutch citizens. Slavery was an attribute of property rights, the granting of which implied a 'thickening of citizenship' for white metropolitan Dutch citizens and, on the other hand, the horrors of legal anti-citizenship for enslaved black and coloured bodies (Jones 2007, 2016). Multiracialized individuals occupied an intermediate position in this formation.

Regardless of the subhuman status assigned to the enslaved, frequent and largely non-consensual sexual relationships between European males and enslaved black women occurred, resulting in multiracialized offspring classified as 'Mulatto' or 'Coloured' (Van Lier 1977, pp. 70–85; Roe 2016, p. 62). The colonial administrators tried to prevent sexual relations between white men and black and indigenous women via plantation ordinances in 1686, 1725, 1749, and 1761 (van Lier 1977, p. 55; De Hart 2014, pp. 9–11) to no avail, judging from the high number of multiracialized offspring (Van Lier 1977; Roe 2016). While concubinage between white men and free women of colour was normalized, colonial authorities tried to prevent marriage between free women of colour and white men (which signified official recognition as a spouse) because it was thought to undermine racial colonial hierarchies in eighteenth-century Suriname (Van Lier 1977, p. 49; De Hart 2014, p. 12).

The practice and regulation of interracialized intimacies reflected a gendered sexual colonial order (Stoler 2002). While white women, as legal persons, were allowed to articulate their property rights regarding enslaved bodies (De Kom 1981), they (whether married or not) met with severe punishment when they acted as sexual subjects by entering into sexual relationships with black men, while the latter would be executed, as a 1711 ordinance demonstrates (Van Lier 1977, pp. 55–56). Sexual relationships between white

women and black men were seen as a serious transgression of gendered racialized boundaries, undermining the (sexual) dominance of white males (Van Lier 1977, p. 55; Wekker 2001; Stoler 2002).

The Dutch Caribbean colonial order strikingly reveals that the recognition of a multiracialized group was not a reflection of the transcendence of racism, but rather a potent sign of a deeply uneven distribution of legal status, life-chances, and opportunities along racial lines. Although a significant number of the multiracialized offspring of white men and black or coloured women were enslaved, they were, for a variety of reasons, much less likely to remain enslaved than the black people (Van Lier 1977, pp. 72–73; Roe 2016). The Surinamese statistics in 1830, just thirty-three years before the abolition of formal slavery in 1863, reveal that while 0.5% of the black population was free ('vrije negers') and 95.5% enslaved ('negerslaven'), 57% of the multiracialized population ('gekleurden') was free ('vrije kleurlingen'), and 43% enslaved ('gekleurde slaven') (Van Lier 1977, p. 71).

The abolition of slavery did not result in a dismantling of the racialized colonial order. White privilege, as an intergenerational asset, continued. The offspring of free multiracialized and free black populations occupied a middle position, while the great majority of black families remained extremely disadvantaged (De Kom 1981; Neslo 2017). In Suriname, it would take until the 1950s before the political emancipation of the members of this class and the descendants of the indentured labourers from China, India, and Java (Indonesia) succeeded in ending the exclusive dominance of the European and 'light skinned elites' (Marshall 2003).

The classifications and terminologies used in the colonial Surinamese censuses of 1938 ('Europeans', 'native born', 'Dutch-East Indians', 'British-East Indians', 'Chinese', 'Bushnegroes', and 'Indians'), 1950 ('Bushnegroes', 'Chinese', 'Creoles', 'Europeans', 'half-bloods', 'Hindustanis', 'Indians', 'Indonesians', 'Coloreds', and 'Negroes') and 1964 ('Creole', 'Hindustani', 'Indonesian', 'Indian', 'Chinese', 'European', 'Bushnegroe', and 'Indian') (Oudschans Dentz 1945, p. 192; Simons 2016, p. 30) still reflected colonial discourses. It would take almost three decades after the political independence of Suriname in 1975 to have these terminologies replaced by others, based on 'perceptions of difference based on socio-cultural identity' (Simons 2016, p. 30; Menke 2016, p. 22).

The coloniality of ethnic and racial classifications and the politics of 'mixedness' are not only matters for the (former) colonies, but have structured the reception of people from the colonies in the metropole as well (Wekker 2016; Essed and Hoving 2014). In the 1930s and after the Second World War, when migration to the Netherlands increased, responses to relationships

between black men and white women and ‘non-responses’ to relationships between black women and white men reveal a class- and gender-specific problematization of interracialized relationships in political and media discourses (Schuster 1999; Jones 2007; De Hart 2014, pp. 27–28).

Nowadays, strikingly, official publications occasionally present the relatively high percentage of ‘mixed marriages’ between ‘Surinamers and Antilleans’ and *‘autochthonen’* as a sign of their successful ‘integration’ into Dutch society. Nevertheless, Caribbean Dutch citizens, legally citizens since 1892, remain classified as ‘Non-Western allochthones’ (now termed as having a ‘migration background’), signifying their non-belonging to the Dutch nation.³ This was paralleled by recurrent political proposals to end free migration from the Dutch Caribbean Islands of Aruba, Curaçao, and Sint Maarten, which are still a part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (Jones 2007, 2016).

‘The Dutch East Indies’

Similar to the Dutch Caribbean, racial classifications in ‘the Dutch East Indies’ (as the Indonesian archipelago was referred to in Dutch colonial discourse) were an inherent part of the colonial order. Slavery existed in ‘the Dutch East Indies’ too, but has been ignored in Dutch historiography and Dutch memory and commemoration culture (Baay 2015). Slavery was a highly racialized phenomenon: the enslaved population consisted of Asians from a variety of countries and regions, and Africans from East Africa (Baay 2015, pp. 35–36). White Europeans in ‘the Dutch East Indies’ were commonly free and slave-owners, but members of the indigenous nobility were slave-owners too (Baay 2015). Furthermore, regardless of ordonnances preventing sexual relations between Europeans and Asians, it was normalized for white males to have relationships with Asian enslaved women (Baay 2015, p. 42).

Consequently, a multiracialized group referred to as ‘Indo-Europeans’ emerged. The racial stratification of the population was formalized in a 1854 Dutch East Indies colonial act, dividing the population into ‘Europeans’, ‘Natives’, and ‘Foreign Orientals’. While these racial/legal classifications allowed some racial boundary-transcendence, the overall hierarchical structure was left untouched, with multiracialized ‘Indo-Europeans’ occupying the middle position. The category of Europeans ‘and their equals’ consisted of white Europeans—primarily white Dutch, but also a wide variety of other Europeans—and, since 1899, the Japanese. The multiracialized ‘Indo-Europeans’ were also classified as European, as far as they were the legally

recognized offspring of European men and indigenous women. The overwhelming part of the indigenous population, the later Indonesians, were legally classified as 'Natives' (a term that had a deeply pejorative meaning). Likewise, the so-called Foreign Orientals ('Chinese, Arabs, Moors and all others that were either Muslims or Pageants') as well as the non-recognized offspring of European men and Indigenous women were also classified as 'Natives'. From 1921 onwards, the three categories were Europeans, Natives, and Foreign Orientals (Van Marle 1951–1952; Jones 2007, pp. 57–60; Tjiook-Liem 2009).

Those classified as 'Natives' could become 'equated with Europeans' if they met certain criteria, such as speaking and writing Dutch and being of Christian faith. Aspiring to become European was connected with concrete privileges and benefits that were attached to this status, such as European education (one of the conditions for a 'European' career path in the colony), public positions (such as civil servant and officer in the colonial Dutch army), pensions (for civil servants), and a fair trial. The 'IndoEuropeans' were (proportionally speaking) more often classified as 'Europeans' and hence eligible for said positions (Jones 2007, pp. 57–60; Tjiook-Liem 2009). However, they did not have the same opportunities as white Europeans, due to widespread racial discrimination (Jones 2007, pp. 57–60, 84–85).

These racial classifications laid the foundation for the legal distinction between 'Dutch citizens' and 'Dutch Subjects non-Dutch' that was introduced in citizenship law. The descent-based 1892 Nationality Act (which would assign full citizenship to recognized children of Dutch males) assigned Dutch citizenship to all those classified as 'Europeans', including the multiracialized category of 'Indo-Europeans', and people that were 'equated with Europeans', while people classified as 'natives' were excluded from Dutch citizenship. Those classified as 'Natives' were assigned the second-class status of 'Dutch Subjects Non-Dutch'. This dualism in Dutch East Indies nationality law was explicitly aimed at the continuation of the colonial hierarchies, legitimated by the sociobiological racism on which the Dutch civilizing mission was based. It was a continuation of *racial* as well as *male* European dominance: European men had independent citizenship status and could transfer their Dutch citizenship to their recognized children, while European women could not transfer citizenship to their children and lost their Dutch citizenship upon marriage to indigenous men. Furthermore, Indonesian women had no legal entitlements over their offspring legally recognized by Dutch men.

These racialized dynamics also transferred into dominant constructions of the Dutch nation after Indonesian independence in 1949. Being 'mixed' began to signify non-belonging in the Dutch nation, as an increasing number

of Dutch citizens from the (former) colonies moved to the Netherlands after decolonization. Multiracialized Dutch citizens were actively discouraged from relocating to the Netherlands, whereas white Dutch citizens were encouraged to do so. While these policies were abolished after several years, they demonstrated how the ideal of pureness was part of constructions of ‘real’ Dutchness and belonging. In the Netherlands, multiracialized individuals were subjected to intense assimilation policies, which were considered highly successful. Consequently, they were not among the target groups of the integration policies the Dutch government developed during the 1980s. Unlike the Caribbean Dutch, they came to be classified as ‘*Western* allochthones’ (Jones 2007, pp. 177–182).

The Metropole

From Religion to Nationality

Although the Netherlands still does not define itself as a ‘migration country’, its metropole has always been marked by migration. Studies on the history of migration to the Netherlands have demonstrated the influx of Jews—first from Spain and Portugal, later also from Eastern Europe—French Huguenots, continuous migration from Germany, and smaller groups from Italy and Poland (Obdeijn and Schrover 2008). Although the Netherlands established itself as a colonial power, migration from the colonies to the metropole was restricted for a long time. Some have claimed the Netherlands remained ‘white’ until after the Second World War as a consequence of such migration restrictions (Hondius 2011). Only recently, Dutch academia has started to explore the ‘black’ presence of Euro-Africans in the Netherlands metropole in earlier centuries (Hondius 2017; Van Stipriaan 2014; Doortmont, Everts and Vrij 2000). These developments are reflected in the Dutch historical census.

The first general census was held in 1829.⁴ When the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) was established in 1899, it held a census every ten years, from 1899 to 1971, with the exception of 1940, the first year of German occupation. The census was discontinued after 1971 in response to a public debate in which the registration of personal data was problematized (Hondius 1999, p. 54). In this problematization, the remembrance of the Second World War was the main argument: the idea was that registration of religion in the civil registry had made it easy for the Nazis to identify Jews, Roma, and other groups that were persecuted and murdered (Katus 1984). Although the Dutch authorities dutifully enforced the registration of Jews on behalf of the German

occupying forces, it is a matter of debate as to whether the civil registry played such an essential role (Tammes 2009; Blom 1987).

Nazi laws defined a person as Jewish if one grandparent was 'racially a full-blooded Jew'. A grandparent was considered Jewish if he or she had belonged to the Jewish religion (Stuhldreher 2007). Hence, although the Nazis believed 'Jewishness' was a racial category, they turned to religious markers to determine 'race', because they had nothing else to fall back on. When the mass deportation to concentration camps started in the summer of 1942, Jews in mixed marriages and of mixed descent were protected from it (not from other anti-Jewish measures). It is contested as to why this was the case. According to some, the Nazis could not agree on how to deal with them. According to others, it was just a matter of time before they would have been deported too (Stuhldreher 2007, Hetzel 1997). Around 75% of the Jews in the Netherlands were deported, about 107,000 people, a considerably higher percentage than in other European countries (Blom 1987); a historical fact that the Dutch are still struggling with.

The deportation of the Jews demonstrates how religion can serve as a proxy for race. Contrary to the census in the colonies, the census in the metropole never included data on race directly. What was counted were foreigners (non-Dutch citizens) and the various religious denominations; the latter starting in 1830. Religion continued to be registered on and off with varying amounts of detail for the various denominations. Starting in 1849, persons who were born abroad, irrespective of nationality, were also counted; this included people born in the colonies. However, the largest group over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were Germans.⁵ It was not always clear why certain data were collected in certain years and not in others and why the nature of the data collected changed (Van Eijl and Lucassen 2001; Van Nederveen Meerkerk 2002).

Statistics on 'mixed marriages' were also produced, but this was—in the metropole—never about race in any direct sense. Statistics on the percentages of mixed marriages by religious affiliation included Protestant-Catholic mixed marriages, marriages with non-religious persons, and the so-called Israelites.⁶ The number of children born from such interreligious marriages was also counted.

The collection of data on interreligious marriages can be explained by the so-called pillarization of Dutch society, which meant that each religious or social group had its own institutions, schools, media, and so on. Members of each group had limited contact with those of other groups, and the Dutch population lived 'apart together'. This lasted until after the Second World

War, when the idea emerged that religion should no longer be decisive in politics. This was against a background where Catholics were problematized as a minority group, with some fearing that the Netherlands would transform from a Protestant into a Catholic nation, due to migration and the higher Catholic birth rate (Schrover 2011, p. 6). Thus, marriages between Catholics and Protestants were seen as particularly problematic and were actively discouraged by churches, social workers, and premarital counselling (Hondius 1999).

In addition, after the Second World War, a process of secularization started, and by the 1990s, it was estimated that 40%–60% of the population was non-religious.⁷ This was considered to be a part of the process of individualization and modernization of Dutch society and was thus expected to continue. As religion seemed to become less and less important, the CBS terminated the production of national statistics on religion in 1984.

In the meantime, the Netherlands had become a society marked by large-scale post-colonial migration following the independence of Indonesia (1949) and Suriname (1975). In the same period, the Netherlands had started to recruit labour migrants from the Mediterranean area—Italy, Spain, Turkey, and Morocco—to serve industrialization. Nowadays, Antilleans, Surinamese, Turkish, and Moroccan migrants are considered the main migrant groups ('non-western allochthones') and the prime target groups monitored in statistics. As over the years, and especially after 9/11, Turkish and Moroccan migrants have become increasingly problematized as Muslims, the CBS resumed producing statistics on religion, using new methods, in 2010 (Schrover 2011, p. 6).⁸

These developments also had consequences for the statistics produced on mixed marriages. The labour migration and ensuing political debates had called attention to mixed marriages between labour migrants and Dutch women (Bonjour and De Hart 2013). It was difficult to gain insight into their numbers, because until 1964, Dutch women marrying foreigners and foreign women marrying Dutchmen 'disappeared' from statistics as their citizenship was dependent on that of the husband (De Hart 2006). In the 1990s, the CBS started to produce statistics on mixed-nationality marriages that went back to 1967.

Not long after that, when the 'allochthone-autochthone' binary was introduced, these statistics on mixed-nationality marriages were replaced by statistics on mixed marriages between allochthones and autochthones (see Table 20.1). Table 20.1 shows the interest in the main target groups of Antilleans, Surinamese, Turkish, and Moroccan and their marriage behaviour

as ‘non-western allochthones’, while the group of ‘western allochthones’ is not subdivided. The lower percentage of persons of Turkish and Moroccan descent leads to a discourse in which ‘Muslims’ are less inclined to intermarry, although some other Muslim groups, such as Egyptians intermarry much more frequently. Also, by focusing on the ‘allochthones’, marrying outside their ‘own group’, statistics construct a discourse in which integration through intermarriage depends on the behaviour of allochthones, not autochthones; the latter are seemingly *always* willing to intermarry. Since 2016, allochthones have been relabelled as ‘persons with migration background’ and statistics have become more detailed, including first- and second-generation persons of migration background and including more groups.

From ‘Allochthone’ to ‘Migration Background’

Although the Netherlands does not have a census in the traditional sense, it collects all kinds of data on the population ‘virtually’ from several digital databases, such as the civil registry and social security, which is considered cheaper and faster than traditional methods, delivering reliable data that are comparable to those of other countries.¹⁰ It must be noted that this ‘virtual census’, based on registration in official databases, leaves little room for self-definition.

CBS statistics on the population are based on the civil registry of municipalities. Statistics on the ethnic or migration backgrounds of the population are based on the birthplace of parents, making the distinction between ‘allochthones’ and ‘autochthones’. This autochthone-allochthone binary in effect signifies that being really Dutch is, at minimum, about being white (Yanow and van der Haar 2013). ‘Autochthone’ stands for ‘people of Dutch heritage’, while ‘allochthone’ (subdivided into ‘Western’ and ‘non-Western’ allochthone) signifies people of foreign birth *or* descent. Thus, someone with Dutch citizenship could be born and raised in the Netherlands, but still be classified as an ‘allochthone’ if one of the parents or (until 2016) *grandparents* were born outside of the Netherlands. One could be a ‘second generation’ or even a ‘third generation allochthone’. Being of ‘multiple’ or ‘mixed’ descent was not an option. Moreover, the category of ‘autochthone’ was practically kept ‘pure’ in a symbolic sense: even if one of the four grandparents was born abroad and the rest in the Netherlands, one was classified as an ‘allochthone’ (third generation), which came very close to a ‘one drop rule’ of national non-belonging. In this binary, birthplace serves as a substitute for race (Yanow and van der Haar 2013, p. 227).

That 'birthplace' is a substitute for a 'race discourse' about real Dutchness in everyday parlance is demonstrated by common expressions, such as 'someone with foreign looks' and 'a real Dutchman', which has strong phenotypical connotations. 'Real Dutchness' generally refers to the people who are phenotypically 'white'. People can 'pass for real Dutch' if they match this phenotype and speak the Dutch language. This racialized dichotomy has alienated millions of Dutch citizens and has had negative effects for those classified as 'allochthones'. In essence, hierarchies were set up between different categories of 'Dutch', which has had deep social, socioeconomic, and political implications. With the rise and mainstreaming of right-wing populism in the Netherlands, Dutch citizens of Muslim background have been particularly targeted in negative political debates about 'allochthones' (Jones 2016). Now that, after years of criticism, the Dutch parliament voted for the abandonment of the autochthone-allochthone binary in policy documents, 'migration background' has become the official term.¹¹ But, the underlying politics of nativism has not disappeared (Balkenhol et al. 2016) and continues to inform dominant political and public discourses where the term allochthone remains in common usage.

The newly introduced term 'migration background' is still based on the birth country of parents; of the mother, but if she was born in the Netherlands, it is based on the birth country of the father.¹² Although the CBS used to lump those with one parent born abroad together with those with two parents born abroad as 'second generation persons of migration background', in 2016, they have started to distinguish between those with one or two parents born abroad.¹³ Although this could potentially serve as a proxy for 'mixed descent', CBS defines them as second-generation persons with migration background.¹⁴ For the period 2000–2018, the number of persons with one parent born abroad remains larger than the person with two parents born abroad (Table 20.2). A further subdivision is then made between 'western' and 'non-western' persons of migration background.

Over the period 2000–2016, the CBS also counted the numbers of third-generation persons of migration background.¹⁶ Although they were included in the category of 'persons with Dutch background' (both parents born in the Netherlands); the third generation was defined as those who have both parents or one parent of second-generation migration background. It was argued that this third generation still faced socioeconomic consequences due to their migration background.¹⁷

Table 20.2 Second-generation persons with migration background

	2000	2005	2010	2016	2017	2018
Total population	15,863,950	16,305,526	16,574,989	16,979,120	17,081,507	17,181,084
Total second-generation migration background	1,344,180	1,516,053	1,659,852	1,831,414	1,861,578	1,892,530
One parent born abroad	825,837	889,779	952,884	1,034,741	1,048,303	1,061,661
Both parents born abroad	518,343	626,274	706,968	796,673	813,275	830,869
Total second generation	2,775,302	3,122,717	3,359,603	3,752,291	3,862,753	3,971,859

Source: CBS¹⁵

From Dual to Single Nationality¹⁸

The Netherlands has been among the few countries that counted the number of dual citizens. Since keeping a civil registry was made mandatory nationwide in 1850, dual nationality was registered from 1920 to 1936 and again from 1967 to 2015. From 1998, the CBS annually published the increasing number of dual citizens (Fig. 20.1).

The recent discontinuation of the registration of dual nationality in 2015 was marked by a debate in which dual nationality became increasingly problematized, especially after 9/11 and the murder of Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh in 2004. Dual nationality was linked to a lack of loyalty and integration, especially for Muslims and Moroccans. For example, it was suggested that the Dutch citizenship of criminal ‘Moroccan’ youngsters with dual citizenship should be withdrawn so that they could be expelled to Morocco. In response to such debates, parents (especially mixed couples) challenged the need to register dual nationality, fearing that the registration of the second, foreign nationality would make their children into ‘allochthones’ unequal to other Dutch citizens, and in danger of being expelled.

Dutch citizens with multiple nationalities , 1 January

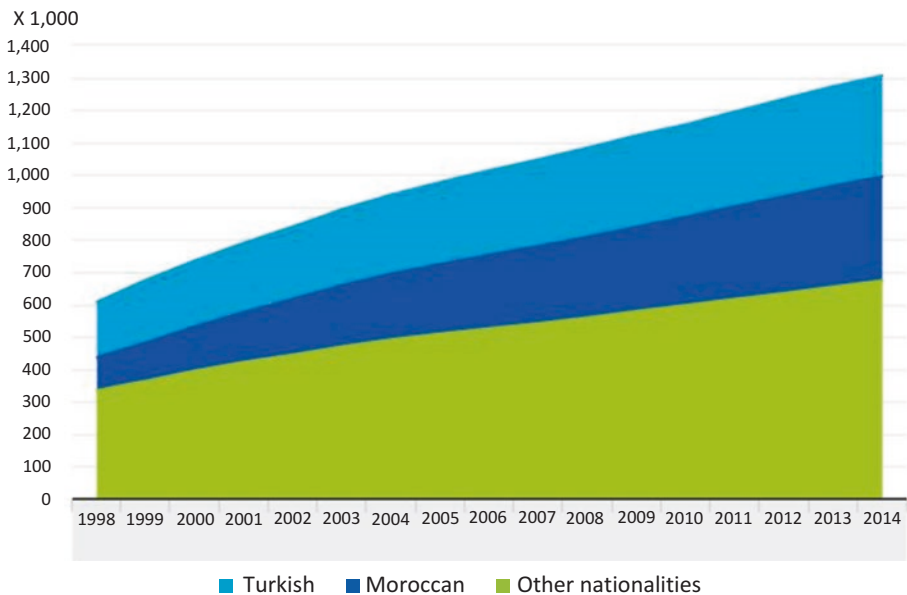


Fig. 20.1 Dutch citizens with multiple nationalities, 1 January 2015. (Source: CBS)

In the political debate that ensued, MPs painted a picture of a hopeful future in which migrants would become an invisible and fully integrated part of Dutch society with only one nationality: the Dutch one. The Dutch government changed the law as a result in 2015. The second citizenship would no longer be registered, and all registrations of the second citizenship were removed from the civil registry.

These debates are important for the perception of ‘mixed descent’ in the Netherlands in two ways. First, they illustrate how dual nationality became a racialized category, which was connected with specific groups of Dutch citizens of migrant (and often Muslim) backgrounds, and not others. Second, they show how politicians and ultimately the government see the future of the Netherlands: a colour-blind, race-less future without celebration of diversity or of mixed descent. In this, future integration is purified and viewed in homogeneous terms; everybody is Dutch and *only* Dutch without holding on to a past of other connections or descent. Being ‘mixed’ was only a transitional stage in the integration process, after which the ‘mixed’ part was discarded.

Concluding Remarks

This overview of categorization in the Netherlands and the ambiguous place that people of mixed descent have held within this categorization demonstrate that the meanings attached to such categorizations are difficult to influence, and often do not fit with how people define themselves. Moreover, these ascribed categories have proven to be deeply hierarchical in both the colonies and the metropole. Even in considering the abolition of the concept of ‘allochthone’ or the registration of dual citizenship as the result of successful bottom-up campaigns, it is important to note that allochthones have just been relabelled as ‘people with migration background’, including the category of non-western. It frames them, including those of ‘mixed descent’, as coming from elsewhere and thus still not ‘really Dutch’. With respect to dual citizens, it is worth pointing out that the fear of the protesting parents has materialized: the Dutch government has amended the Dutch Nationality Act, allowing for deprivation of Dutch citizenship from dual nationals—and only dual nationals—who committed terrorist acts or travelled to Syria. The first cases of deprivation of Dutch citizenship have entered the Dutch courts, even for minor acts such as retweeting a ‘terrorist’ tweet. This illustrates once more that categorizations of difference are not only about how one is defined or how one defines himself or herself, but they have real-life and legal consequences.

Considering the Dutch reluctance to deal with issues of race, it seems highly unlikely that the category of ‘mixed race’ will become accepted in the Netherlands in the near future. Given the often hierarchical and essentialist nature of top-down politics of classification, the authors of this chapter are not even sure that is a goal worth striving for. Even if there would be room for self-definition, the question remains who is counting and why.

Finally, from the bottom upwards, there have been some efforts to come up with alternative terminology. Although already coined in 1987,¹⁹ in a recent novel²⁰ and in the ensuing public debates, the term ‘double-blood’ (*dubbelbloed*) was revived by people of mixed descent, as a rejection of the earlier, colonial term ‘half-blood’. Despite its connotations of biological race-thinking, the people who used it see it as positive, indicating that they are both black and white, and do not need to choose.²¹ However, emphasizing bloodlines, even when positively valued as ‘double’, is not the transcendence of a racialized world view but the reproduction of an old colonial discourse anew.

Notes

1. Established in 2013, the NGO LovingDay.NL presents itself as a platform for academics and others interested in issues of mixed families and mixedness: <http://www.lovingday.nl/>. Stichting Buitenlandse Partner focuses on providing information on migration law: <https://www.buitenlandsepartner.nl/content.php>. An earlier NGO, Stichting LAWINE, existed from 1984 to 2011 and focused on Dutch white women in mixed families. As far as there is any research on mixed couples and people of mixed descent, it focuses on ‘ethnicity’ and not on ‘race’ (Hondius 1999; De Hart 2003; Sterckx 2014).
2. <https://deniekasan.wordpress.com/2008/07/09/tip-index-op-de-volkstelling-1811/>.
3. Unlike the Dutch East Indies, the population of Caribbean colonies was assigned Dutch citizenship after 1892.
4. The historical census can be found on www.volkstellingen.nl/nl/volkstelling.
5. Twee eeuwen Nederland geteld, 2007 DANS en CBS.
6. Loop van de bevolking per gemeente Statistiek van den loop der bevolking van Nederland 1936 editie deel 2 (136 p.) pagina 67. Available at http://www.historisch.cbs.nl/resultaten.php?nav_id=2-0.
7. The percentages differ between the two main statistical institutions, CBS and Sociaal Cultureel Planbureau (SCP).

8. The statistics are based on self-reporting in a survey on the working population.
9. Trouwen met een partner uit een andere bevolkingsgroep, <https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/maatwerk/2016/22/kernindicatoren-integratie-2016> last visited 16 November 2018.
10. Dutch census 2011, available at <https://www.cbs.nl/en-gb/news/2014/47/dutch-census-saves-time-and-money>.
11. Kamerstuk (Parliamentary Paper) 32,824, nr. 125, 17 March 2016; Handelingen (Proceedings of Parliament) 2015–2016, nr. 67, item 21, 22 March 2016.
12. <https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/faq/specifiek/wat-verstaat-het-cbs-onder-een-allochtoon-> last visited 15 November 2018.
13. How does the CBS do it? Standard definition *allochtoon*. <https://www.cbs.nl/NR/rdonlyres/26785779-AAFE-4B39-AD07-59F34DCD44C8/0/index1119.pdf>.
14. <http://statline.cbs.nl/Statweb/publication/?DM=SLNL&PA=70787ned&D1=2&D2=0&D3=0&D4=a&D5=8,18,28,44-46&HDR=G4&STB=G1,G2,T,G3&VW=T> last visited 15 November 2018.
15. <https://opendata.cbs.nl/statline/#/CBS/nl/dataset/37325/table?ts=1542539671810> last visited 15 November 2018.
16. <http://statline.cbs.nl/Statweb/publication/?DM=SLNL&PA=70688NED>
17. Jaarrapport integratie 2016, p. 20. <https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/publicatie/2016/47/jaarrapport-integratie-2016>.
18. This paragraph is based on Kulk and De Hart (2011).
19. In the brochure on child-upbringing by Stichting Lawine, *Van Haflboed tot dubbelbloed*, Amsterdam 1987.
20. Etchica Voorn, *Dubbelbloed*, 2017 In de Knipscheer.
21. In debate centre De Rode Hoed, Amsterdam, 12 February 2019. *Dubbelbloed en identiteit*.

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